

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

ON the 18th day of April, 2012, the Amarillo Traffic Commission met at 1:00 p.m. at City Hall on the third floor in the City Commission Conference Room to review agenda items and to receive a presentation by Marcus Norris, City Attorney, on conducting public hearings. A Public Hearing was held at 1:30 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers on the third floor of City Hall.

ATTENDANCE

<i>Members</i>	<i>Present Today</i>	<i>No. Meetings &amp; Public Hearings Held Since Appointment</i>	<i>No. Meetings &amp; Public Hearings Attended Since Appointment</i>	<i>No. Work Sessions Held Since Appointment</i>	<i>No. Work Sessions Attended Since Appointment</i>
<i>Kenneth Graham</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Bob Balliett</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Leon Church</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>D.J. Stubben</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Dean Downey</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Charlie Graham</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Craig Gualtiere</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Tiller Watson III</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Mark Nair</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jerry Bird	Traffic Engineer
Judy Alexander	Recording Secretary
Lt. Michael Miller	Amarillo Police Department

The invocation was given by Commissioner Watson, and Commissioner Church led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Stubben established a quorum and called the regular meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The following items of business were conducted:

1. **Public Hearing on the Proposal to Ban Texting and/or Cell Phone Use while Driving.**

Commissioner Stubben welcomed attendees to the public hearing on the proposal to ban texting and/or cell phone use while driving. She announced the following procedures will be used: Any person who wishes to speak must first be recognized by the chair and come to the microphone and state his name and address. Each speaker is allowed three minutes unless the chair calls a person back to the microphone or the speaker has a new idea that has not been previously expressed. The order of the speakers shall be random, without regard to whether one is for or against the regulation. Speakers shall direct all comments and questions to the chair, not toward others in the room. Commissioner Stubben invited anyone in the audience to come forward to speak.

Robyn Willis, 6104 Tuscan Village, stated that she is Vice President of the Share the Road organization, a local volunteer board who advocates for safer roads and supports the cell phone ban. The organization's mission is to educate drivers to reduce distracted driving. Members give presentations to high school students and others at community events to promote safety. They have collected over 2000 pledges from people who have agreed to not text and drive. One of their members, Cindy Whitney, was killed on a bicycle ride when a driver dropped his cell phone and reached down to pick it up, failing to keep his eyes on the road. She appealed to members of the Traffic Commission to consider a total cell phone while driving ban. She said that the organization is supportive of the cell phone ban in school zones, but lives outside of school zones are important too. She spoke of intentional and unintentional acts. In her opinion, picking up a cell phone while driving is an intentional and dangerous misuse. She asked Commissioners act to save lives and to make the community a safer place to live.

Mike Gause, 4900 Carmel, agreed that cell phone use has gotten out of hand. He said he has personal knowledge of a death attributed to cell phone use and distracted driving. He stated that NTSB has recently come out with a recommendation to ban cell phone use while driving and the Federal Motor Carriers mandated bus drivers, truckers, and hazard material carriers to refrain from cell phone use. As a former emergency worker, he questioned the safety of an exemption for emergency vehicle drivers. He said driving is a privilege not a right. He requested the Traffic Commission take the lead for a safer community.

Duane Henson, 3217 Rusk, stated he was against the ban. His research indicated that accident rates increased in areas where a ban had been enacted because drivers were attempting to hide their phones, increasing the time their eye were off the road. He was concerned that if accident rates increased, insurance rates would also increase. He expressed concern over enforcement and privacy issues. He agreed cell phone use and distracted driving are serious problems, but he said parents should take responsibility for educating their children about the dangers.

Cherie Sanders, 2819 S. Crockett, stated she was opposed to the ban. A mother of three, she said she is in her vehicle several hours a day transporting her children to their activities, and she thinks a ban is unreasonable. A call might be an important one, such as a return call from a doctor or one of her children. In her opinion, a quick handheld call is safer than reaching for a Bluetooth. She also said her research indicated a ban did not reduce accident deaths.

Eddie Dunn, 2015 Magnolia, stated he supports the ban. His primary concern was the protection of young children from distracted drivers using their cell phones.

Commissioner Stubben asked Robyn William to come forward and share her statistical information she had gathered. She stated the source of the following information was [Distraction.gov](#):

Drivers are 23 times more likely to crash while texting,  
Cell phone use was reported in 18% of distracted driving-related fatalities.  
Drivers who are texting take their eyes off the road for 4.6 seconds. At  
55 mph, that is the akin to traveling the length of a football field blindfolded.  
Drivers using handheld devices are four times more likely to be involved in a  
crash involving injuries.  
The crash risk for drivers who are texting is 23 times greater than those who  
are not.  
Cell phone usage reduces brain activity associated with driving 37%.  
Cell phone usage impairs the reaction time the same as the illegal blood  
alcohol level of .08%.  
16% of accidents with teen drivers include fatalities.

Commissioner Nair asked Cherie Sanders to expound on the source the data she had. He said he wanted to make sure the members of the Traffic Commission used due diligence and had not overlooked anything. She stated the websites she used were [Harvard.edu](#), [NPR.org](#), and [PC World.com](#).

Commissioner Stubben thanked members of the Traffic Commission, city staff, and attendees of the hearing for their time, diligence, and input on the project. She announced there would be another public hearing on Wednesday, April 25, at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioner Stubben announced that Bob Balliett had resigned from the Traffic Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

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Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer